

§ 536.201

5 CFR Ch. I (1–1–09 Edition)

a different pay system with an equal or higher grade; and

(5) Determining whether pay retention eligibility is lost or a retained rate is terminated when an employee is placed in a lower-graded position under a different covered pay system and the action is taken for personal cause or at the employee's request.

(b) *Geographic conversion.* When comparing positions under paragraph (a) of this section which are stationed in different geographic locations where different pay schedules apply, the comparison rate of the employee's existing position of record (as in effect before the movement to a position in a different pay system) must be determined as if the official worksite of that position of record were the same as the official worksite of the new or offered position of record. Geographic conversion is not necessary for the purpose of comparing grades if an employee is being moved to (or given a reasonable offer of) a position under the same covered pay system (*i.e.*, same grading structure).

[70 FR 31305, May 31, 2005, as amended at 73 FR 66155, Nov. 7, 2008]

Subpart B—Grade Retention

SOURCE: 70 FR 31305, May 31, 2005, unless otherwise noted.

§ 536.201 Mandatory grade retention.

(a) Subject to the requirements in this section and in §§ 536.102 and 536.203, an agency must provide grade retention to an employee who moves from a position under a covered pay system to a lower-graded position under a covered pay system as a result of—

- (1) Reduction in force procedures, or
- (2) A reclassification process.

(b) An agency must apply § 536.105 in determining whether a position under a different covered pay system is a lower-graded position.

(c) An employee's movement to a lower-graded position is considered to be the result of reduction in force procedures when the employee has received a specific reduction in force notice and—

- (1) The employee is placed in the position offered in the notice; or

(2) The employee is placed in a position other than that offered in the notice but in the same agency, if the position was offered in writing and at the initiative of management.

(d) An employee's movement to a lower-graded position is considered to be the result of a reclassification process when—

- (1) The employee remains in his or her position after it is reclassified; or

(2) The employee is placed in a different position in the same agency before the effective date of the reclassification action, if the position was offered in writing and at the initiative of management after the employee received a specific written notice that the position would be reclassified to a lower grade.

[70 FR 31305, May 31, 2005, as amended at 73 FR 66155, Nov. 7, 2008]

§ 536.202 Optional grade retention.

(a) Subject to the requirements in §§ 536.102 and 536.203, an authorized agency official may provide grade retention to an employee moving from a position under a covered pay system to a lower-graded position under a covered pay system when—

(1) Management announces a reorganization or reclassification decision in writing (including a general notice or a specific notice) that may or would affect the employee; and

(2) The employee moves to a lower-graded position (either at the employee's initiative or in response to a management-initiated offer) on or before the date the announced reorganization or reclassification is effected.

(b) An agency must apply § 536.105 in determining whether a position under a different covered pay system is a lower-graded position.

(c) When an employee is offered a position with grade retention under this section in anticipation of a reduction in grade, the agency must inform the employee in writing that acceptance of the position is not required and that declination of the offer will not affect the employee's entitlement to grade retention under § 536.201 if the agency

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actually moves the employee to the lower-graded position.

[70 FR 31305, May 31, 2005, as amended at 73 FR 66155, Nov. 7, 2008]

§ 536.203 Additional eligibility requirements for grade retention.

(a) An employee is eligible for grade retention under § 536.201(a)(1) only if the employee has served for at least 52 consecutive weeks in one or more positions under a covered pay system at one or more grades higher than the grade of the position in which the employee is being placed. Such service is deemed to include service performed by an employee of a nonappropriated fund instrumentality of the Department of Defense or the Coast Guard (as defined in 5 U.S.C. 2105(c)) who is moved to a position in the civil service employment system of the Department of Defense or the Coast Guard, respectively, without a break in service of more than 3 days.

(b) An employee is eligible for grade retention under § 536.201(a)(2) based on a reclassification of his or her position only if, immediately before the reduction in grade, that position was classified at the existing grade or a higher grade for a continuous period of at least 1 year.

(c) An employee is eligible for grade retention under § 536.202 only if, immediately before being placed in the lower grade, the employee has served for at least 52 consecutive weeks in one or more positions under a covered pay system at one or more grades higher than that lower grade. Such service is deemed to include service performed by an employee of a nonappropriated fund instrumentality of the Department of Defense or the Coast Guard (as defined in 5 U.S.C. 2105(c)) who is moved to a position in the civil service employment system of the Department of Defense or the Coast Guard, respectively, without a break in service of more than 3 days.

(d) Eligibility for grade retention under § 536.201 or 536.202 ceases under the conditions specified in § 536.207.

§ 536.204 Period of grade retention.

(a) Unless grade retention is terminated under § 536.208, an employee is entitled to retain the grade held imme-

diately before the action that provides entitlement to grade retention for 2 years beginning on the date the employee is placed in the lower-graded position.

(b) During the 2-year period of grade retention, if an agency further reduces an employee in grade under circumstances also entitling the employee to grade retention, the employee must continue to retain the previous retained grade for the remainder of the first 2-year period. At the end of the first 2-year period, the employee is entitled to retain the grade of the position from which the second reduction in grade was made for 2 years following the effective date of the second reduction in grade.

(c) Notwithstanding § 536.207(a)(1), grade retention continues to apply to an employee serving under an interim appointment made under 5 CFR 772.102 for the duration of the original 2-year grade retention period if the employee's grade was retained under this part in the appointment immediately preceding the interim appointment.

§ 536.205 Applicability of retained grade.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, an agency must treat an employee's retained grade as the employee's grade for all purposes, including pay and pay administration, premium pay, retirement, life insurance, and eligibility for training. If the employee's actual position of record is under a different covered pay system than the covered pay system associated with the retained grade, the agency also must treat the employee as being under the covered pay system associated with the retained grade for the same purposes.

(b) An agency may not use an employee's retained grade—

(1) In any reduction in force procedure;

(2) To determine whether an employee has been reduced in grade for the purpose of terminating grade or pay retention (*i.e.*, based on personal cause or at the employee's request);

(3) To determine whether an employee retains status as a GM employee (as defined in 5 CFR 531.203); or